

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 ADDIS 13174 041532Z

50

ACTION AF-07

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 FDRE-00 HEW-02

INR-05 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 RSC-01 SWF-01 /024 W

----- 104381

P R 041421Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO USIA WASHDC PRIORITY

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 1733

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ADDIS ABABA 13174

USIAC

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: MEDIA ATTACKS WASHINGTON POST STORY ON DROUGHT

1. IN A STRONGLY WORDED PAGE ONE STORY IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY ETHIOPIAN HERALD (SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3), THE DROUGHT RELIEF AND RE-HABILITATION COMMITTEE CALLED A RECENT WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE ON THE DROUGHT IN ETHIOPIA "MALICIOUS AND ONE PURPOSELY INTENDED TO DISCOURAGE DONOR AGENCIES FROM EXTENDING THEIR ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS OF FAMINE IN ETHIOPIA..."

2. THE HERALD SAID, "A SPOKESMAN FOR THE COMMISSION TOLD THE HERALD YESTERDAY ABOUT HIS DISAPPROVAL OF DAVID OTTAWAY'S REPORT PUBLISHED IN THE WASHINGTON POST UNDER THE TITLE: "DOUBTS ARISE OVER ETHIOPIA'S GRAIN CRISIS -- RELIEF EXPERTS CLAIM DROUGHT PEAK IS OVER."

3. THE STORY WENT ON TO UNDERLINE THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE DROUGHT AND SAID THAT "AN ESTIMATED FOUR MILLION PEOPLE ARE SUFFERING FROM FAMINE AND A HOST OF OTHER DROUGHT-BORNE TRAGIC CONSEQUENCES SUCH AS MALNUTRITION AND SICKNESS."

4. R&R COMMISSION SPOKESMAN WAS QUOTED AS SAYING "AN ESTIMATED 278,000 TONS OF GRAIN" ARE NEEDED TO FEED "SEVERAL MILLION SOULS SCATTERED IN ELEVEN REGIONS ACROSS THE COUNTRY..."

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 ADDIS 13174 041532Z

5. IT WAS FURTHER STATED THAT THE COMMISSION'S OFFICIAL ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION "HAS BEEN CONFIRMED BY INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN DROUGHT AFFECTED AREAS..."

6. IN ADDITION TO HERALD STORY, ETHIOPIAN RADIO ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 4 AFTERNOON NEWSCAST SAID, "A REPORT IN THE WASHINGTON POST RECENTLY DOWNPLAYING THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE DROUGHT SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA ANGERED DROUGHT RELIEF AND REHABILITATION OFFICIALS FOR THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS TOWARDS THE COUNTRY'S EFFORTS TO SECURE MUCH NEEDED RELIEF FROM ABROAD..."

7. NEWSCAST ALSO SAID, "...ABOUT TWO WEEKS AGO LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL JOURNALISTS WERE TAKEN ON A TOUR OF THE HARARGHE ADMINISTRATIVE REGION WHERE CLOSE TO ONE MILLION PERSONS, PARTICULARLY IN THE VAST ARID AREA OF THE OGADEN, WERE FACED WITH SERIOUS HUNGER AND THIRST DUE TO LACK OF RAINS FOR FOUR CONSECUTIVE YEARS. HE SAID THE WASHINGTON POST CORRESPONDENT WAS AMONG THOSE INVITED TO VISIT THE OGADEN, BUT WAS UNABLE TO DO SO..."

8. RADIO ETHIOPIA SAID AP AND REUTERS CORRESPONDENTS WHO DID VISIT THE DROUGHT STRICKEN AREA WROTE STORIES CONFIRMING SITUATION IN HARARGHE AND THAT "MOSCOW NEWSPAPER, PRAVDA, CARRIED A REPORT BY ITS CORRESPONDENT IN ADDIS ABABA ABOUT THE DISASTROUS AFFECTS OF FOUR CONSECUTIVE YEARS OF DROUGHT IN THE OGADEN..."

9. NEWSCAST SAID THE OTTAWAY RELIED ON INTERVIEWS WITH "SO-CALLED RELIEF EXPERTS," BUT THAT HE SHOULD HAVE VISITED THE DROUGHT AFFECTED AREAS PERSONALLY AND TALKED TO PEOPLE ON THE SCENE. THEY SAID THIS ACTION WAS "INEXCUSABLE."

COMMENT

DESPITE SCREAMING AND SHOUTING OF DROUGHT RELIEF AND REHABILITATION COMMISSION ECHOED IN LOCAL MEDIA, USAID OFFICIALS FIND OTTAWAY STORY ACCURATE AND A TRUE INDICATOR OF DROUGHT SITUATION. OTTAWAY DID NOT REPEAT NOT BASE HIS STORY ON ADDIS SOURCES ALONE. HE VISITED AREAS COMMISSION CITED, INCLUDING HARARGHE, AND FOUND "POCKETS OF DROUGHT" BUT NOTHING NEARLY AS CRITICAL AS INDICATED BY THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT. IN ADDITION TO CHECKING THE ALLEGED DROUGHT AREAS, OTTAWAY, WHO IS THOROUGH AND RELIABLE REPORTER, TALKED WITH MISSION AID OFFICIALS, OTHER DONOR AGENCIES IN ADDIS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 ADDIS 13174 041532Z

AND WITH R&R OFFICIALS AS WELL. IN FACT, HE SHOWED COMPLETED ARTICLE TO R&R COMMISSIONER SHIMELES ADUGNA, WHO READ STORY WITHOUT MAKING ANY COMMENT.

FURTHERMORE, RADIO ETHIOPIA STAFFER, WHO WAS PREPARING FEATURE STORY ON DROUGHT, TOLD USIS THAT HE USED OTTAWAY REPORT FOR BACKGROUND MATERIAL AND CHECKED FACTS AND FIGURES CITED IN OTTAWAY STORY. "IT WAS COMPLETELY ACCURATE IN EVERY RESPECT," HE SAID, "AND I CHECKED EVERYTHING THOROUGHLY WITH THE NATIONAL BANK, THE

GRAIN BOARD AND ALL OTHER LOCAL SOURCES..."

LEWIS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, DROUGHTS, FOOD ASSISTANCE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 NOV 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MorefiRH
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974ADDIS13174
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740315-0869
From: ADDIS ABABA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741175/aaaacInk.tel
Line Count: 117
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MorefiRH
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <11 JUN 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <11 DEC 2002 by MorefiRH>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEDIA ATTACKS WASHINGTON POST STORY ON DROUGHT
TAGS: PFOR, WASHINGTON POST
To: USIA
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005